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BY THE U.S. GENERAL ACCOUNTING OFFICE

Report To The Chairman, Subcommittee On Defense
Committee On Appropriations
House Of Representatives

COMPLETED

ORIGINAL

Military Tour-Length And Tour-Curtailment Policies And Practices

Defense will spend about $1.24 billion in fiscal year 1985 to move military personnel to and from overseas locations. Lengthening tours and limiting curtailments would lower this cost. Yet, when Defense changes tour lengths, cost considerations play a secondary role.

In 1980, Defense shortened tours for most first-term personnel in long-tour areas from 30 to 18 months. This was to reduce disciplinary problems and may have been appropriate for the time. Disciplinary problems have declined, but it is not clear whether this resulted from shorter tours or from higher pay and better quality of recruits. In light of the savings that would accrue from lengthening tours, GAO believes that Defense should reevaluate its earlier decision.

GAO's limited test of curtailments indicated that the justifications for allowing people to move before their tours were completed seemed reasonable. However, neither GAO nor Defense can evaluate the services' overall management of curtailments at this time because their data bases are inadequate.

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NATIONAL SECURITY AND
INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS DIVISION

B-219237

The Honorable Joseph P. Addabbo
Chairman, Subcommittee on Defense
Committee on Appropriations
House of Representative

Dear Mr. Chairman:

This is in response to your February 13, 1984, request that we evaluate certain aspects of the Department of Defense's (DOD's) permanent change of station (PCS) and tour-length policies and practices. Your request relates to work we undertook in response to House Conference Report No. 97-980, which expressed concern about whether DOD's "transfer policies result in too many moves at great expense to the taxpayer." In response to that general concern, on September 27, 1983, we provided your Committee with an extensive information paper that discussed a wide variety of PCS issues, including historical trends on costs and the number of moves. It also identified several actions taken by DOD and the services over the years to hold down PCS budgets.

In fiscal year 1985, DOD will spend about $2.4 billion to accomplish approximately 1.3 million PCS moves. Well over half of these moves are to bring people into and separate them from the military--PCS move categories over which DOD and the services have few options for reducing costs. However, about 52 percent ($1.24 billion) of the PCS budget will be spent for moving military personnel to and from overseas locations--called rotational moves. A small change in an overseas tour length--either an increase or decrease--can have a substantial impact on the PCS budget. The Army, for example, estimates that permanently increasing or decreasing the prescribed European tour by as little as one month would decrease or increase PCS cost by about $17.2 million.

As you requested, this report focuses on two areas where DOD and the services can exercise certain management options and controls and thereby either reduce or increase the PCS budget. First, you asked how DOD and the services develop, justify, and change overseas prescribed tour lengths--longer average tours of duty resulting in fewer moves and thus lower costs. Second, you asked whether DOD and the services have adequate systems to ensure that service members complete their prescribed tours of duty and that individual tour curtailments are justified and kept to a minimum.

PRESCRIBED TOUR LENGTHS

Prescribed tour lengths for career personnel at most overseas locations, especially those with large populations of military personnel, were established in the 1950's, and have remained largely unchanged since then. The initial 1957 DOD directive calling for uniformity of tour lengths among the services stated that the standard accompanied overseas tour at "desirable" locations would be 36 months and that unaccompanied tours would be 24 months; however, the directive, and subsequent revisions to it, did not define "desirable" or provide criteria for making this judgment.

The DOD directive also stated that, when considering prescribed tour-length policies, or changes to them, PCS cost differentials should be addressed. We found no documentation explaining the rationale for selecting 36 and 24 months as the standard tour lengths for accompanied and unaccompanied personnel, or what cost tradeoffs were considered.

While prescribed overseas tour lengths have changed little over the past 25 years, some adjustments have been made, both to lengthen or shorten prescribed tours. These changes were usually for locations with smaller concentrations of military personnel. When a service requests a change in a prescribed tour, DOD considers the area's general desirability and comparability with acceptable patterns of American living, taking into consideration such factors as

--climate;
--political climate;
--available standards of living;
--transportation;
--adequacy of medical, dental, schooling, housing, and other forms of support.

The services do not follow a uniform or analytical process to weigh the pros and cons of tour-length changes. Instead, the justifications usually consist of letters and memoranda characterizing the location in general terms, discussing the above factors. The Air Force and Marine Corps use a more detailed tour-length survey form, usually completed by base commanders, to provide information on the location. The services' justification package for changes in tour lengths generally does not identify the PCS cost differential that would occur as a result of lengthening or shortening the prescribed tour of duty. With one exception--that involving unaccompanied tours in long-tour areas for first-term personnel, we found no evidence that questions of cost and benefits (in terms of improved retention, morale, readiness, or reduction of disciplinary problems) were evaluated in the decision-making process.

First-term enlisted personnel tour lengths

The decision, effective in fiscal year 1980, to permit first-term unaccompanied Army personnel on 3-year initial enlistments to serve 18 months in long-term overseas areas, rather than 30 months as called for by the DOD directive, was extensively documented. It was justified on the basis that, despite the added annual cost (estimated in 1979 to be about $34.7 million, plus having an additional 2,800 personnel in transit), shorter tours were cost-effective when compared to the personnel problems being attributed to long tours. These problems included low morale, drug abuse, high disciplinary and crime rates, and early attrition.

We reviewed the supporting documentation and, while it did not demonstrate that the ills attributed to 30-month first-term tours of duty were in fact caused by the long tours or would be cured by shorter tours, we do not disagree with the merits of the decision, given conditions existing at the time. However, several factors related to first-term personnel have changed since the late 1970's when this decision was being considered. For example, recruit quality has dramatically improved since 1980, and pay has increased significantly (27.6 percent in fiscal years 1981 and 1982 alone). These factors, not evaluated by the Army, could also have influenced declines in first-term personnel problems.

Conclusion and recommendation

The Army has continued to track data on first-term enlisted personnel problems, and has noted that these problems have decreased since 1980. However, it is not clear that tour length alone is the most critical factor that led to these improvements. In March 1985, the Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel attributed much of the overall decline in disciplinary problems to the higher quality of Army enlistees over the past few years. We are not suggesting that the 18-month first-term enlisted tour decision should necessarily be reversed. However, in view of DOD's estimate that as much as $75 million could be saved annually by lengthening first-term tours, we recommend that the Secretary of Defense direct the Army to reevaluate its decision to shorten the first-term tour length to 18 months, taking into account changed conditions since 1980.

TOUR CURTAILMENTS

Our test of individual tour curtailments indicated that the justifications for approved curtailments generally seemed reasonable. Many were made for compassionate or humanitarian reasons, medical problems, or to fill high-priority jobs. However, due to problems in the military services' PCS data bases,

our test was more limited than what would be necessary to make a judgment about DOD's overall management of tour curtailments.

We were unable to evaluate the variances between prescribed and actual tour lengths for a statistically valid sample of officers and enlisted personnel from each service because the services' data bases (1) were not uniform with respect to coding or types of data included, (2) did not contain certain key data elements such as prescribed tour lengths and reasons for moving, and (3) were of questionable reliability. We were informed that the Army was asked to design and determine the cost of implementing a new PCS management information system, and we agree with DOD that a decision on whether to implement a new system should be postponed until the cost of developing and installing such a system is known. Consequently, we are making no recommendations concerning this issue at this time.

Appendix I describes our specific objectives, scope, and methodology for this review, and provides further details on our findings.

AGENCY COMMENTS

On May 9, 1985, we requested official comments on a draft of this report, as is our policy. On June 12, 1985, DOD informed us that it would not comment officially on the draft report, but that it would respond to the final report as required by 31 U.S.C. 720.

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Copies of this report are being sent to the Office of Management and Budget; the Secretaries of Defense, the Army, the Navy, and the Air Force; and other interested parties.

Sincerely yours,

Frank C. Conahan

Frank C. Conahan
Director

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ABBREVIATIONS

DOD	Department of Defense
PCS	Permanent Change of Station
GAO	General Accounting Office

MILITARY TOUR-LENGTH AND TOUR-CURTAILMENT POLICIES AND PRACTICES

Meeting national security objectives calls for locating a significant percentage of the total military force outside the continental United States. In fiscal year 1985, this represented about 39 percent of the force. Thus, the number of permanent change of station (PCS) moves to overseas locations, called rotational moves, for military personnel is both extensive and costly. This type of PCS move accounts for about $1.24 billion, or 52 percent, of the $2.4 billion PCS budget for fiscal year 1985. Other types of PCS moves are operational moves within the United States or within an overseas theater, training moves, unit moves, and accession and separation moves. (See app. II for a description and cost of PCS moves.)

While a direct tie between PCS issues and national policy clearly exists, the number and cost of overseas moves are driven to some extent by factors over which DOD and the services can exercise management control. These controllable factors include prescribed lengths of overseas tours of duty, policies concerning family accompaniment, and the services' ability to manage assignments so that individuals complete their tours of duty.

This review is a continuation of work we undertook in response to House Conference Report No. 97-980, which asked GAO to study DOD's travel policies and practices. The Conference Report expressed the Committee's concern that DOD's "transfer policies result in too many moves at great expense to the taxpayer." To explore the many complex issues and concerns involved, and in order to provide a frame-of-reference for future evaluations, we furnished the Committee an information paper dated September 27, 1983, on DOD's PCS policies and practices. The information paper provided background and perspective for this report and discussed the following aspects of PCS:

--the different types of PCS moves and historical trends in terms of costs and the number of moves;

--different ways to measure "turbulence," a term widely used in DOD to refer to the degree to which personnel moves exceed minimum turnover rates required by standard tour policy;

--management actions and specific program initiatives DOD and the services have taken to reduce PCS costs--such as "homebasing" and advanced assignment policies, the "do-it-yourself" moves program, and the overseas extension program; and

--other PCS concerns of special interest, such as members' out-of-pocket expenses for service-directed moves and officer tours in the Washington, D.C., area.

OBJECTIVES, SCOPE, AND METHODOLOGY

Your February 13, 1984, request was for us to focus on the following two specific aspects of PCS policies and practices over which DOD and the services can exercise a degree of management control and, by so doing, increase or decrease the overall PCS budget:

--Prescribed tour lengths: Our first objective was to examine how DOD and the services develop, justify, and change prescribed overseas tour lengths and the extent to which analysis of the cost-versus-benefit tradeoff is a part of this process. We did not judge whether overseas tour lengths should be longer or shorter or whether they should be accompanied or unaccompanied.

--Tour curtailments: Our second objective was to assess whether DOD and the services have established adequate systems for controlling and monitoring individual exceptions to standard assignment lengths, and for ensuring that shortened tours are minimized and that those that do occur are adequately justified.

To determine how prescribed tour lengths were established and from time to time changed, we (1) reviewed DOD and service policy directives and supporting documentation related to this issue, (2) examined available documentation related to requests for prescribed tour-length changes, and (3) interviewed DOD and military service officials responsible for managing and overseeing PCS programs and for acting on recommendations to change prescribed tour lengths. We also reviewed Permanent Change of Station (PCS) Study, dated September 1983, prepared by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower, Installations, and Logistics). Among other PCS issues, this report addressed DOD and service tour-length policies.

To assess whether DOD and the services have adequate systems for monitoring and controlling exceptions to prescribed tour lengths, we planned to (1) obtain information on the services' officer and enlisted assignment management systems by interviewing responsible officials and reviewing pertinent documents and (2) analyze variances, and reasons for such variances, between actual tour-length experience (i.e., actual time-on-station) and prescribed tour lengths.

We planned to perform this variance analysis by comparing selected data elements for a sample of individuals (officers and enlisted personnel) from each service, covering the period 1978 through 1983--a 6-year time frame that would have allowed for at least one full tour of duty. The data elements to be included were (1) personal data, such as social security number, marital status, number of dependents, and grade or rank; and (2) assignment data, including the type of tour (accompanied or unaccompanied), tour location, prescribed tour length, actual tour length, and the reason for any curtailment. Also, to determine whether curtailments occurred more frequently among certain military occupational groups, our plan was to obtain military occupational codes as part of the data-collection process.

However, after considerable effort working with each service to obtain the data needed to perform an analysis of variances between actual and prescribed tour lengths, both on a longitudinal basis as mentioned above and on a point-in-time snapshot basis, we determined that a reliable analysis is not feasible at this time. While each service has an automated data base which contains many of the data elements needed for such comparisons, none was able to provide complete and reliable data on all elements.

Because our planned approach for analyzing variances between prescribed and actual tour lengths was not feasible, we decided on the less desirable, but still useful, approach of interviewing people whose tours had been shortened. The purpose of this procedure was to gain insight into the reasons tours were shortened and to determine whether the curtailments seemed to be necessary. The services' turbulence reports, required by DOD Directive 1315.7 "Military Personnel Assignments," show that about 6 to 16 percent--depending on the service and reporting period--of all rotational moves occurred more than 30 days before completion of the tour of duty. We obtained from the services a listing of tour curtailments that occurred in a single month--March 1984. We selected this month for our test because service officials indicated that it was as representative of tour-curtailment activity as any other, and because most individuals would have been settled at their new location by the time our interviews were to be conducted.

The curtailment list obtained from each service was to have included all officer and enlisted personnel whose tours of duty were shortened, along with information on their current duty station, the overseas location from which they returned, the actual length of time at their overseas duty station, their prescribed overseas tour length, and the reason for the curtailment.

The services provided a computer listing of people whose records indicated that they had returned early. However, the services were not confident that the list was complete or

accurate, and our subsequent use of the listing showed that, indeed, it was not fully accurate. Consequently, the sample of individuals whose curtailments we reviewed cannot be considered representative or projectable. The number of individuals from each service whose documentation we reviewed was as follows:

Table 1

Review of Curtailment Documentation

	Officers	Enlisted	Total
Army	30	50	80
Navy	3	38	41
Air Force	17	48	65
Marine Corps	5	50	55
Total	55	186	241

We selected the above cases for review on the basis of individuals' overseas tour locations, the number of months they were curtailed, their prescribed tour lengths, and the reasons for the curtailments. From this group of 241 individuals, we selected 89, based on their availability, for follow-up interviews. The makeup of this group is shown below:

Table 2

Interview Population

	Officers	Enlisted	Total
Army	11	16	27
Navy	2	17	19
Air Force	8	17	25
Marine Corps	4	14	18
Total	25	64	89

In addition to interviewing the 89 individuals whose tours were curtailed, we also interviewed the military official responsible for reassigning the member returning from overseas.[1]

We also interviewed officials and reviewed pertinent documents at the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower, Installations, and Logistics), the Army Military Personnel Center, the Naval Military Personnel Command, the Marine Corps Personnel Management Division--all in Washington, D.C.--and the Air Force Manpower and Personnel Center in San Antonio, Texas. We performed our review from May 1984 to January 1985, in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards.

PRESCRIBED TOUR-LENGTH POLICY

Although PCS costs are sensitive to small changes in average tour lengths, DOD and the services do not periodically analyze the cost-effectiveness of differing tour-length options.[2] DOD Directive 1315.7, "Military Personnel Assignments," establishes uniform assignment policies, including uniform overseas tour lengths for all services.[3] Each service issues regulations and instructions implementing and expanding on the directive, and although uniformity is the goal, service-specific variations to prescribed tour lengths can be, and have been, authorized by the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower, Installations, and Logistics).

The initial directive, issued in May 1957, stated that the standard accompanied overseas tour at "desirable" locations would be 36 months and that unaccompanied tours would be 24 months. The directive did not define "desirable," nor did it provide

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[1]The responsible military official is known as a "detailer" in the Navy, a "monitor" in the Marine Corps, an "assignment manager" in the Army, and a "resource manager" in the Air Force.

[2]An analysis of tour-length options was done for the Defense Manpower Commission (Defense Manpower Commission Staff Studies, Vol. IV, May 1976). This analysis was primarily concerned with the comparative cost of accompanied versus unaccompanied tours, but it indicated that prescribed accompanied tours longer than 36 months would reduce PCS costs.

[3]The DOD Directive 1315.7 in effect at the time of our review was dated December 6, 1977. During our review, DOD was in the process of revising this directive, and a revised directive was issued on March 19, 1985, after we had completed our work. The revised draft modified certain reporting requirements, incorporated changes that had been approved since the 1977 directive, and made other adjustments, but the substance of the directive did not change.

criteria for making this judgment. Also, we found no documentation explaining how the 36- and 24-month accompanied and unaccompanied tour lengths were developed and selected as the appropriate standard, or what other tour-length tradeoffs were considered. Because the 1957 directive was the first attempt to bring uniformity to prescribed overseas tour lengths among the services, it called on the services to review their tour-length policies and bring them into line with the directive by June 1958.

There have been some changes to and deviations from prescribed tour lengths since 1958, generally affecting areas with smaller populations of military personnel. However, a complete review has not been made to determine whether prescribed tour lengths, including the standard accompanied and unaccompanied tour lengths for "desirable" locations, are still appropriate or optimal--considering such factors as cost and budget impacts of differing tour lengths, similarity of living conditions among locations, personnel stability, and readiness.

DOD's stated policy is that, to the extent possible, tour lengths outside the continental United States will reflect the "desirability" of each location. However, the DOD directive offers no guidance on whether a particular set of conditions warrants a particular tour length or what set of conditions should exist for a location to be considered desirable. The directive simply states that tour lengths, and recommended changes to them, should depend on

> the general desirability of the area and comparison with acceptable patterns of American living, measured by such factors as: climate; available standards of living; political climate; availability and adequacy of medical, dental, schooling, housing, and other forms of support; off-duty pursuits and recreational activities; and transportation.

The directive does not elaborate on this statement or discuss how such conditions should be measured. Also, the directive does not state how differing conditions should be translated into prescribed tour lengths. (See app. III for a listing of current prescribed tours of duty.)

Since documentation was not available to determine what cost and condition factors were considered when the last full review of prescribed tour lengths was made in 1958, to determine how prescribed tour lengths are developed and justified, we reviewed documentation for several service-initiated requests for changes to prescribed tour lengths. We found that the services do not follow an analytical process to weigh the pros and cons of tour-length changes. Instead, the justifications usually consisted of

minimal documentation in the form of letters and memoranda describing the location in general terms, discussing such things as overall living or political conditions, housing adequacy, medical and educational facilities, and security conditions. The Air Force and the Marine Corps used a more detailed Tour Length Survey form--usually completed by the base commander or his designee--to provide information on the location. However, whether memoranda or the survey forms were used to describe the location, it was not possible for us to determine from the documentation or from discussions with DOD and service officials how the conditions described resulted in the prescribed tour-length decision.

The DOD directive also states that when determining prescribed tour-length policies, or changes to them, the effect on PCS budgets should be considered. Even a small change in the average overseas tour length--either an increase or decrease--can have a substantial impact on the PCS budget. Army officials estimated, for example, that permanently increasing or decreasing the prescribed European tour lengths by as little as one month would decrease or increase annual PCS costs by about $17.2 million. We noted, however, that the services' justification packages for changes in tour lengths generally did not identify the PCS cost differential that would occur as a result of lengthening or shortening the prescribed tour of duty. With one exception, we found no evidence that cost and benefits (in terms of improved retention, morale, readiness, or reduced disciplinary problems) were evaluated in the decision-making process.

First-term enlisted personnel tour lengths

The exception to the usual practice involved the decision, effective in fiscal year 1980, to permit first-term unaccompanied Army personnel on 3-year initial enlistments to serve 18-months in long-term overseas areas, rather than the 30-months called for by the DOD directive. This decision was extensively documented and was justified based on the conclusion that shorter tours were cost-effective when compared to the personnel problems being attributed to longer tours.

We reviewed the documentation supporting this decision, and although it did not lead us to the conclusion that 18-month tours are more cost-effective than longer tours, we do not take issue with the decision, given conditions existing at the time. However, as discussed below, various factors related to first-term personnel have changed since the late 1970's when this decision was being considered, and thus, the decision may no longer be appropriate.

DOD Directive 1315.7 states that

> first-term members serving for 3 years or less will be given no more than one assignment following initial basic and skill training, unless required to serve in a short-tour area, in which case such members will be given no more than two assignments (in different locations).

This standard assignment policy essentially means that 3-year enlistees, if assigned unaccompanied to a "long-tour" area such as Europe, serve a minimum 30-month overseas tour of duty. Army officials began questioning the wisdom of this policy as early as 1974, citing morale and disciplinary problems as evidence that 30-month tours were too long. The problems identified appeared to be strictly Army problems and did not extend to the other services. By late 1978, the Commander in Chief of the United States European Command insisted that 30-month first-term tours were too long, and in a December 1978 memorandum to the Deputy Secretary of Defense, stated that

> every indication we have points to the inescapable conclusion that tours of duty for first-term soldiers in excess of 18-months contribute significantly to dissatisfaction, drug abuse, disciplinary problems and other distractors that adversely impact on readiness. We continue to believe that a reduction of the tour of duty to 18 months for these soldiers remains the single most effective step we can take to improve the morale and combat readiness of this command.

As a result of this proposed solution to the personnel problems being experienced, a Tour Length Task Force was formed and charged with developing an Army position concerning an 18-month overseas tour for all first-term enlisted personnel. The Task Force looked both at sociological changes that had occurred in the makeup of the Army since the end of the draft in 1973, as well as quantifiable considerations, such as attrition rates, disciplinary incidence, drug abuse, and crime rates among first-term personnel in Europe versus those in the United States. The quantifiable comparisons showed these problems to be somewhat more prevalent among first-termers in Europe than among their peers in the United States, but the report indicated that this data was inconclusive since the Army's AWOL and desertion rates were much higher in the United States than in Europe.

The Task Force report did not demonstrate that the ills attributed to 30-month first-term tours of duty were indeed caused by the long tours or that they would be cured by shortening tours to 18 months. The Task Force estimated in 1979 that

annual PCS costs would increase by $34.7 million and that 2,800 additional in-transit personnel would result from shortening first-term tours to 18 months. Nonetheless, it concluded that "the 18-month alternative is the most cost-effective." The Army's request to offer first-term 3-year enlistees an 18-month option in Europe was approved, beginning with fiscal year 1980.

The PCS report dated September 1983, by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower, Installations, and Logistics), estimated that the 18-month first-term tours of duty--versus longer tours--now add an estimated $75 million annually to PCS and other personnel costs. We did not independently verify DOD's cost estimate. The Army believes that DOD's cost estimate is high, and that a change in first-term tour-length policy would more likely save $34 to $35 million per year in PCS costs once the change was fully implemented. It appears that the Army's cost-savings estimate applies only to PCS cost and does not take into account the cost of the additional personnel who are in transit and, therefore, not available for duty.

Data collected by the Army shows that the incidence of disciplinary and other first-term personnel problems has decreased since the short-tour policy was introduced in 1980. However, the Army has not shown and is not claiming that the 18-month tour policy specifically resulted in the declines in disciplinary and morale problems. Other factors, such as the following, not fully evaluated by the Army, also influence first-term personnel problems:

--Since 1980, the Army's percentage of high quality and high-school-diploma-graduate recruits has risen substantially. In fiscal year 1980, only 49 percent of new male Army recruits were high school graduates, as compared to 89 percent in fiscal year 1984. Similarly, in fiscal year 1980, 50 percent of all Army recruits scored in the top-three mental categories, but, by fiscal year 1984, 90 percent did. Data shows that higher quality recruits are less likely to become disciplinary problems, and in March 1985, the Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel attributed the overall declines in disciplinary rates to the higher proportion of quality recruits.[4]

--During the mid- to late-1970s, military pay raises generally did not keep pace with raises in the private sector. Personnel surveys done during that period indicated that "low pay" and "eroding" benefits were a significant dissatisfier and a major reason given for leaving the service. To counteract these problems, the Congress, in October 1980 and 1981, awarded two large catch-up pay raises that cumulatively increased military basic pay and allowances by an average of 27.6 percent.

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[4]Testimony before the Senate Committee on Armed Services, Subcommittee on Manpower and Personnel, March 7, 1985.

Also during this period, special and incentive pays and the quality of military life improved. Retention rates and morale both improved significantly.

There may be valid reasons for continuing with the 18-month first-term tour option in Europe, such as the compatability of this option with the Army's New Manning System that the Army is currently evaluating.[5] However, since first-term personnel problems have not been clearly linked with longer tours, and since subsequent data is also inconclusive as to reasons these problems have subsided, DOD and the Army should review their earlier decision, taking into account the other factors that may also have reduced the first-term personnel problems.

TOUR CURTAILMENTS

A basic requirement of DOD Directive 1315.7 is that the military departments establish assignment procedures that permit service members to complete prescribed tours of duty. The services have established such procedures; nonetheless, a PCS issue that continues to be of concern to congressional committees, DOD, and others--most recently the President's Private Sector Survey on Cost Control (the Grace Commission)--involves tour curtailments; i.e., military personnel being permitted or required to shorten their tour of duty and move before its completion.

Our test of individual tour curtailments indicated that the justifications for most of those approved seemed reasonable. Many were made for humanitarian or compassionate reasons, medical reasons, or to fill high-priority jobs. However, due to the inadequacies of the services' PCS data bases, our test was more limited than would be necessary to make a judgment about DOD and the services' overall management of tour curtailments.

As explained earlier, we were unable to evaluate the variances between prescribed and actual tour lengths for a statistically valid sample of officers and enlisted personnel from each service because the services' data bases (1) were not uniform with respect to coding or types of data included, (2) did

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[5]The Army's new manning system calls for a unit movement system to achieve stability and a regimental system to enhance unit identification. For the past three years the Army has been evaluating the Cohesion, Operational Readiness, and Training (COHORT) unit replacement system whereby soldiers go through initial training as a group, and report to a State-side installation as a group to join their company-level leaders for a stabilized 3-year unit life-cycle. For those units deploying to Europe, this means 18 months in the United States and 18 months overseas.

not contain certain key data elements such as prescribed tour lengths and reasons for moving, and (3) were of questionable reliability. However, to gain insight into the extent that problems may exist in the services' approving unjustified curtailment requests, we reviewed documentation on 241 military personnel and interviewed 89 of those who, during the month of March 1984, terminated their overseas tours early.

The purpose of our interviews was to verify information contained in the documentation and to gain a better understanding of the types of curtailments and the reasons for them and to determine whether the individuals thought that their shortened tours could have been completed. To confirm information received from the service member involved, we also interviewed the official responsible for making assignments. The results of our review of documentation is shown in the following table.

Table 3

Frequency and Type of Curtailment

Reason for curtailment	Army	Navy	Air Force	Marine Corps	Total
Compassionate or humanitarian[a]	16	8	11	1	36
Priority job reassignment	8	7	12	1	28
Excess position or unit closure	3	7	11	-	21
Medical or pregnancy	3	3	10	1	17
To start school	6	3	2	3	14
Promotion or career progress	1	-	3	9	13
Reenlistment option	-	5	-	1	6
Skill disqualification	2	-	1	-	3
Retirement	3	-	-	-	3
To accommodate joint domicile of military spouses	-	2	-	-	2
Removed for cause	1	-	1	-	2
Volunteered to fill priority job	-	2	-	-	2
Embarassment to United States	1	-	-	-	1
Ease of administration	-	-	1	-	1
Curtailed from an extension	6	-	-	-	6
Reason unknown	16	2	1	17	36
Not a curtailment[b]	14	2	12	22	50
Total	80	41	65	55	241

[a]Includes divorce, dependents' education or medical problems, and other family problems.

[b]Includes data errors, incorrect data codes, and changes in the type of tour (accompanied versus unaccompainied).

The reasons for tour curtailments varied among the services, and between officers and enlisted personnel:

--Army enlisted personnel and officers were most frequently curtailed for compassionate reasons, and officers' tours were also sometimes shortened to start school or because of a high-priority job reassignment.

--Navy enlisted personnel were most frequently curtailed (1) to fill priority jobs, (2) because their jobs were eliminated, or (3) because of pregnancy. Officers were more frequently curtailed for medical reasons or because their jobs were eliminated.

--Air Force officers and enlisted personnel were most frequently curtailed for humanitarian reasons or to fill high-priority jobs.

--Marine Corps enlisted personnel, when the reason was documented, were generally curtailed as a result of promotion.

Our interviews showed that most of the tour curtailments were for reasons that seemed justified and involved shortening tours by only a few months. However, in response to a question about whether they thought they could have finished their tours of duty without a curtailment, about 50 percent from each service responded that they probably could have without suffering any adverse affect. Military officials responsible for reassignments were less certain of this, and only in the Navy did about the same proportion of "detailers" generally agree with the service member that the tour probably could have been completed.

Because of the problems in the services' PCS data bases and reporting systems, our test of tour curtailments was more limited than would be necessary to make a judgment about the adequacy of their overall management process for assuring that prescribed tours of duty are completed. Thus, we are in general agreement with the following comments contained in the September 1983 PCS report by the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Defense (Manpower, Installations, and Logistics):

> [PCS] reporting has been incomplete and much of what is reported is useless. For example, updated exceptions [curtailments or extensions] as a rate of total PCS moves cannot be determined for first-term personnel nor does the reporting system provide any data useful for time-on-station analysis.
>
> * * *
>
> Existing management information systems are unable to capture key information necessary for

analysis and detailed understanding of the PCS program. For example, the Services are unable to track average time-on-station, and as a consequence are unable to define how their PCS programs and initiatives translate into greater stability at the unit level.

The PCS report recommended that the existing PCS reporting systems be replaced with one that provides data useful for monitoring and evaluating the services' PCS management. While the services generally agreed that a more uniform and accurate reporting system would be useful for analyzing trends and evaluating management actions, they believed that their current systems were adequate for their own internal assignment management process. All the services were concerned with the cost of developing and implementing a new automated PCS reporting system. At the time we completed our field work, we were told that the Army had been asked to coordinate the design of a new PCS reporting system. However, because of the anticipated cost of the system, the services did not expect to implement it until late 1985 at the earliest. DOD officials advised us that, as of June 10, 1985, a decision had not been made on whether to implement a new PCS management information system.

DESCRIPTION AND COST OF PCS MOVES

The six types of PCS moves are as follows:

Accession Moves.	Moves that occur when individuals go from their homes or commissioning locations to their first duty stations or to a school for 20 weeks or more.
Separation Moves.	Moves that occur when individuals leave active duty, including separations from overseas locations.
Operational Moves.	Moves that occur when individuals transfer within the continental United States or within an operational theater when transoceanic travel is not involved.
Rotational Moves.	Moves that involve transoceanic travel, either to or from an overseas duty station. Excluded from this category are accessions directly to an overseas location, separations from overseas, and unit moves to and from overseas.
Training Moves.	Moves that involve attending a formal course of study for 20 weeks or more, except those involving transoceanic travel which are categorized as rotational moves.
Unit Moves.	Moves that occur when individuals move, either within the United States or overseas, as members of an organized unit.

The estimated number and cost of these moves for fiscal year 1985 are shown in the following table.

TABLE 4

Estimated Number and Cost of PCS Moves for Fiscal Year 1985

Type of Move	Army			Navy			Air Force			Marine Corps			Total		
	No.	Cost (millions)	Percent	No.	Cost (millions)	Percent	No.	Cost (millions)	Percent	No.	Cost (millions)	Percent	No.	Cost (millions)	Percent
Accession	152,458	$123.4	13.6	102,484	$77.7	14.8	81,866	$61.1	7.7	41,899	$32.4	19.2	378,707	$294.6	12.3
Separation	147,065	131.8	14.5	86,701	63.0	12.0	72,498	79.5	10.1	38,964	20.3	12.0	345,228	294.6	12.3
Training	14,248	49.4	5.4	30,767	49.5	9.4	18,327	28.3	3.6	6,190	7.5	4.5	69,532	134.7	5.6
Unit	4,639	8.8	1.0	7,276	22.6	4.3	412	.6	.1	424	.8	.5	12,751	32.8	1.4
Operational	28,696	59.4	6.6	53,071	115.9	22.0	33,498	112.6	14.3	14,263	32.6	19.4	129,528	320.4	13.4
Rotational	169,426	503.2	55.5	37,745	198.8	35.8	97,403	478.9	60.8	37,333	71.1	42.2	341,907	1,242.0	52.0
Non-Temporary Storage	-	30.7	3.4	-	9.1	1.7	-	26.8	3.4	-	3.7	2.2	-	70.3	2.9
Total	516,532	$906.6	100.0	318,044	$526.5	100.0	304,004	$787.8	100.0	139,073	$168.3	100.0	1,277,653	$2,389.2	100.0

Note: Totals may not add due to rounding

APPENDIX II

APPENDIX III

PRESCRIBED OVERSEAS TOURS OF DUTY

Location	Tours in Months	
	Accompanied	All Others
Alaska--except:	36	24
Eielson Air Force Base	36	18
Big Delta Area, including Juneau, Kenai-Whittier Area, and Wildwood Station	24	18
Bethel, Kodiak Island, Fort Greely, and Nome	24	12
Aleutian Peninsula and islands west of 162nd meridian, including Attu, Dutch Harbor, and Point Barrow	18	12
Adak	24	15
American Samoa	NA	12
Antartic Regions	NA	Indefinite
Argentina	36	24
Ascension Island	NA	12
Australia--except:	36	24
Alice Springs, Woomera, and North West Cape	24	15
Austria	36	24
Bahamas--as indicated:		
Eleuthera	24	18
Andros Island	24	12
Grand Bahama Island, San Salvador and Turks and Caicos	NA	12
Bahrain	24	12
Belgium	36	24
Belize	24	12
Benin	24	12
Bermuda--except:	36	24
Marine Barracks	36	15
Bolivia	24	18

APPENDIX III

Location	Tours in Months	
	Accompanied	All Others
Brazil--except:	36	24
Recife, Salvador, and Santa Cruz	24	18
Fortaleza	NA	18
Burma--except:	24	12
Rangoon	24	14
Canada--except:	36	24
Comox, British Columbia,	NA	12
St. Margarets, New Brunswick,	24	12
Argentia, Newfoundland,	24	18
Goose Bay, Labrador,	24	12
Stephenville, Newfoundland,	NA	12
Senneterre, and Quebec	24	12
Chile	36	24
Columbia	36	24
Costa Rica	36	24
Cuba, Guantanamo Bay	24	12
Cyprus	24	18
Denmark--except:	36	24
Greenland	NA	12
Diego Garcia	NA	12
Dominican Republic	36	24
Ecuador	36	18
Egypt--except:	24	18
Sinai	NA	12
El Salvador	NA	12
France--except:	36	24
Corsica	NA	18
Germany--except:	36	24
Todendorf	24	18
Reisenbach	NA	15
Gibraltar	24	12

APPENDIX III

Location	Tours in Months	
	Accompanied	All Others
Greece--as indicated:		
Nea Makri	36	24
Athens, Ekali, Eleusis, Erithraia, Kat imidihi, Keretea, Kifisia, Koropi, Marathon, Parnis, Patras, Pendelikon, and Piraeus	30	18
Crete (except as indicated)	24	18
Souda Bay	NA	12
Thessaloniki	24	15
Other locations	NA	12
Guam	24	15
Guatemala	36	24
Hawaii--except:	36 to 48	24
Kauai, Kilauea Military Camp	30	18
Pohakuloa Training Area	24	18
Honduras	24	18
Hong Kong	36	24
Iceland--except:	24	12
Hofn	NA	12
India	24	12
Indonesia	24	12
Israel	24	12
Italy--except;	36	24
San Vito and Brindisi	30	18
Sardina--except:	24	12
La Maddalena	24	15
Decimomannu Air Base	NA	12
Sicily--except:	NA	12
Sigonella	24	18
Comiso	NA	12
Ghedi, Gioia del Colle, Martina Franca, Mt. Corna, Piacenza, Rimini, and Mt. Venda	24	18
Piano di Corsi and Mt. Finale Ligure	NA	18
Mt. Vergine	24	15
Mt. Grappa, Mt. Torara, Naz Sciaves, and Reggio	NA	15
Cima Gallina, Gambarie, Mt. Cimona Mt. Limbara, and Mt. Paganella	NA	12

Location	Tours in Months	
	Accompanied	All Others
Jamaica	24	12
Japan--except:	36 to 48	24
Misawa	30 to 36	18
MCAS Iwakuni/FMF	36	12
Wakkahai	24	15
Akashi, Kobe, and Osaka	24	15
Akizuki Kure	24	12
Ryukyu Island--as indicated:		
Army and Air Force personnel	36	18
Navy and U.S.M.C. personnel	30	18
All Military Services (as indicated):		
MCAS Futema, MCB Butler	36	12
Isolated Areas (Kuma Shima)	NA	12
Johnston Atoll	NA	12
Jordan	24	12
Kenya	24	18
Korea	24	12
Kuwait	24	12
Liberia	24	12
Malaysia	NA	12
Malta	24	12
Mexico	36	24
Midway Island	24	15
Morocco--except:	24	15
Casablanca	24	12
Errachidia	NA	12
Netherlands--except:	36	24
Aruba	24	18
New Zealand	36	24
Nicaragua	24	18
Norway	36	24
Oman	NA	12

Location	Tours in Months	
	Accompanied	All Others
Pakistan	24	18
Panama--except:	36	24
Galeta Island	24	18
Paraguay	24	18
Peru--except:	36	24
Lima MAAG Group--enlisted	30	18
Philippines--except:	36	18
Philippine Island Marine Barracks	36	15
Portugal--except:	36	24
Azores Islands	24	15
Puerto Rico--except:	36	24
Roosevelt Roads	36	18
Ponce and Isabela	36	18
Vieques Island	NA	12
Saudi Arabia	24	12
Senegal	24	12
Singapore	36	24
Somalia	24	12
Spain--except:	36	24
Alcoy, Constantina, Elizondo, Rosas, and Villatobas	30	18
Cartegena, El Ferrol, Guardamar del Segura, and Sonseca	24	18
Moron AB	24	15
Santiago	NA	18
Balearic Islands and Gorremandi	NA	15
Adamuz, Ciudad Real, and Estaca DeVares	NA	12
Sudan	24	12
Taiwan--except:	24	15
Taipei	30	18
Tainan AB	NA	15
Taichung	24	12
Kaohsiung	NA	12

APPENDIX III

Location	Tours in Months	
	Accompanied	All Others
Thailand--except:	NA	12
Bangkok	24	12
Sattahip	NA	12
Tunisia	24	12
Turkey--as indicated:		
Adana, Golcuk, and Sile	24	18
Ankara, Incirlik CDI, Izmir, Samsun, and Yamanlar	24	15
Elmadag and Karatag	24	12
Trabzon	NA	15
Other areas (Istanbul, Diyarbakir, Drince, Iskenderon, and Karamursel)	NA	12
United Kingdom--except:	36 to 48	24
St. Mawgan (England); Londonderry (Northern Ireland); and Holy Loch, Machrihanish, RAF Mormond Hill, Thurso (Scotland)	24	18
Brawdy (Wales)	30	18
RAF Spadeadam	24	12
Upper Volta	24	12
Uruguay	36	24
U.S. Trust Territory--as indicated:		
Saipan	24	18
Enewetak Atoll	NA	12
Kwajalein Atoll	24	12
Venezuela	24	18
Virgin Island	36	24
Wake Island	NA	12
West Indies--as indicated:		
Anguilla, Antigua, and Barbados	24	18
St. Lucia	NA	12
Yugoslavia	24	18
Zaire	24	12

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